

School Council Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct is intended as a guide only. Schools may wish to develop their own school council code of conduct or school council protocols.

School council members agree to observe the following principles:

- The primary considerations in making decisions are the school's values and what is in the best interests of students.
- School council is accountable to and must report to, both its local school community and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- School councillors will abide by all legal requirements, regulations, DEECD policies and guidelines.
- School councillors will at all times behave in a civil and respectful manner.
- The underlying principles of the school council code of conduct include the promotion of:
 - **Respectful** partnerships
 - Clear and **honest** two-way communication
 - **Transparent** processes
 - **Democratic**, informed decision-making
 - Personal and professional **integrity**.
- Conflict between school council members needs to be dealt with respectfully and fairly and in a manner that both reflects this and is seen to reflect this. That is, in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- All councillors are expected to represent all members of the school community. Members are not there to represent just one viewpoint, or the view of an individual. School councillors will therefore regularly seek the views and opinions of the whole school community, especially when major policies are being developed.
- School council is not an appropriate forum for the discussion of individual school staff, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community.
- A council member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of the people involved. If the issue relates to an operational matter of the school, the parent should be encouraged to speak with the principal or the classroom teacher. However, if the issue relates to a school policy or procedure, it should be put on the agenda for discussion at the next school council meeting, where it will be dealt with in a generic sense to protect the privacy of individuals involved.
- Councillors should respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to sensitive matters that might arise at school council meetings especially where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents.
- Councillors should observe the need for orderly council meetings and that council needs to "speak as one voice" in the public arena, once a decision has been made.
- Councillors must declare any conflict of interest when it arises.

- School councillors will actively participate in sub-committees and meetings. If councillors are unable to attend a meeting, they are requested to submit an apology to the executive officer (the principal) prior to the meeting.
- School council meetings will normally be open to the school community. Visitors or observers can be present with the agreement of the principal and a decision of council. Visitors have a right to speak but must do so through the presiding member. They have no voting rights. There are, of course, times when the council meeting, or part of the meeting will be closed, such as for discussion about principal selection.